

Photography in a Public Place

In most instances members of the public and the media do not need permission to film or take photographs in public places and police have no power to stop them filming or photographing incidents or police personnel.

In the UK people in public places effectively have no right to privacy and you can photograph in these places as you wish. Model releases do become a real concern if you plan to sell your work onto third parties like image libraries and so on though, as they are likely to request one, so that they can use the image in whatever context they like, without the fear of being sued.

However, the law applies to photographers as it does to anybody else in a public place. So there may be situations in which the taking of photographs may cause or lead to public order situations, inflame an already tense situation, or raise security considerations. Additionally, the police may require a person to move on in order to prevent a breach of the peace, to avoid a public order situation, or for the person's own safety or welfare, or for the safety and welfare of others.

Officers do not have the power to delete digital images or destroy film at any point during a search.

The following links provide more detailed advice on this subject:

UK Photographers' Rights Guide V2 - A legal Opinion by Linda Macpherson LL.B, Dip.L.P.,LL.M

<http://www.sirimo.co.uk/2009/05/14/uk-photographers-rights-v2/>

The guide is a 2 page PDF, it will print out front and back of an A4 page allowing you to make leaflets to hand out. The guide is intended as an overview of the current legal situation in the UK for photographers, it is not a definitive bible of UK law. You are advised to print a copy of this opinion and carry it with you.

Metropolitan Police Policy

<http://www.met.police.uk/about/photography.htm>

Home Office Circular

<http://www.homeoffice.gov.uk/about-us/publications/home-office-circulars/circulars-2009/012-2009>

Photographers Rights and the Law in The UK

<http://www.urban75.org/photos/photographers-rights-and-the-law.html>

The Photographer's Rights in US Guide

<http://www.krages.com/phoright.htm>

Tring and District Camera Club – A detailed look at the subject

http://www.tringcameraclub.co.uk/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=73&Itemid=68